

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LISCON

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TAGS: ECOSOC, EGEN

SUBJECT: SYG WALDHEIM ON PORTUGUESE DECOLONIZATION

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EXCHANGE ON SUBJECT OF PORTUGUESE
DECOLONIZATION WHICH OCCURRED DURING SYG WALDHEIM'S
PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, JULY 4:

"QUESTION: FOLLOWING THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN
PORTUGAL, I UNDERSTAND YOU OFFERED YOUR GOOD OFFICES
TO GENERAL SPINOLA FOR THE DECOLONIZATION OF TERRI-
TORIES IN AFRICA. THIS OFFER WAS NOT ACCEPTED. COULD
YOU GIVE US THE REASONS WHY THIS OFFER WAS NOT ACCEPTED
AND WHETHER YOU THINK THE UNITED NATIONS COULD HAVE
ANY ROLE IN PORTUGUESE DECOLONIZATION FOLLOWING YOUR
TALKS WITH MR. SOARES?

"SECRETARY-GENERAL: I AM GLAD TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION.
FIRST OF ALL, THE OFFER TO HELP IN THIS REGARD WAS
NOT REJECTED. I HAD A VERY GOOD, A VERY FRUITFUL TALK
WITH MR. SOARES. I GOT A VERY GOOD IMPRESSION MFROM MY
TWO-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH HIM IN NEW YORK ABOUT TWO
WEEKS AGO. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT MR. SOARES IS SIN-
CERELY INTERESTED IN SETTTLING THE QUESTION OF
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DECOLONIZATION, AND GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO THE

PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES IN AFRICA. BUT, OF COURSE, HE, TOO, HAS HIS PROBLEMS. AT ANY RATE THERE IS NO QUESTION OF REFUSING OUR OFFER TO HELP. ON THE CONTRARY, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS INVITED ME TO VISIT LISBON IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION FURTHER NOT ONLY WITH HIM BUT WITH THE OTHER LEADERS OF THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY, OF COURSE, GENERAL SPINOLA. MAY I ADD THAT THE UNITED NATIONS HAS ADOPTED A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND THAT MR. SOARES ASSURED ME THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THESE RESOLUTIONS.

" THE SITUATION HAS DEFINITELY CHANGED AND I AM PERSONALLY HOPEFUL THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO WORK OUT AN AGREEMENT. AS YOU KNOW THE MAIN DIFFERENCE LIES IN THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL IS PROPOSING A REFERENDUM FIRST AND THEN TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS. THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT, SUPPORTED BY THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, HOLD THE OPINION THAT A REFERENDUM IS NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION WISHES INDEPENDENCE. THEY ARE ASKING FOR AN IMMEDIATE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THEN TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS FOR THE TRANSFER OF POWER. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CAN AND SHOULD PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN THIS REGARD." DALE

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